

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 1. (Currently Amended) A method for selecting a contact path between a
2 first member of an organization and a target individual, the method comprising:
3 storing in a memory data associated with multiple members of the organization,
4 wherein the data includes data that directly states one or more areas of expertise for the
5 multiple members of the organization and the target individual is one of the multiple
6 members of the organization;
7 tracking network communications of the members of the organization;
8 analyzing the level of interaction between the members of the organization based
9 on the network communications to develop a people network;
10 receiving data indicating an area of expertise desired by the first member of the
11 organization;
12 processing the data that directly states the one or more areas of expertise for the
13 multiple members of the organization to identify at least one or more ~~[[the]]~~ target
14 ~~individual~~ individuals of the organization, wherein the data associated with ~~[[the]]~~ each
15 target individual states that the target individual has expertise in the area of expertise
16 desired by the first member of the organization;
17 determining a contact path between the first member of the organization and at
18 least one of the one or more ~~[[the]]~~ target ~~individual~~ individuals, the contact path
19 including one or more members of the organization having at least a predetermined level
20 of interaction with at least one of the first member and at least one of the target ~~individual~~
21 individuals and the contact path identifies one or more members of the organization that
22 represent a proposed path through the people network for the first member to contact at
23 least one of the target ~~individual~~ individuals, wherein the one or members of the contact
24 path are distinct from the first member and the target individual; and
25 providing the contact path to the first member.

1 2. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:

2 modeling the people network of the organization as a directed graph having plural
3 nodes representing members of the organization and plural edges representing levels of
4 interaction between members of the organization;
5 wherein analyzing the level of interaction comprises analyzing the edges
6 associated with the first member and the target individual.

1 3. (Original) The method of Claim 2 wherein each edge comprises one
2 or more weights, each weight representing a level of interaction for one type of network
3 communication.

1 4. (Original) The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight represents the
2 level of interaction for e-mail communication.

1 5. (Original) The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight represents the
2 level of interaction for instant messenger communication.

1 6. (Original) The method of Claim 3 wherein one weight represents the
2 level of interaction for telephone communication.

1 7. (Canceled)

1 8. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
2 determining plural contact paths, each contact path representing a proposed path
3 through the people network for the first member to contact a member of the organization
4 having the desired expertise.

1 9. (Original) The method of Claim 8 further comprising graphically
2 depicting the plural contact paths as nodes representing members of the organization and
3 edges representing the level of interaction between the members, each node and edge
4 having an appearance that corresponds to the strength of the contact path.

10. (Currently Amended) A system for determining a people network within a communications network, the system comprising:

a processor; and

a memory, coupled to the processor, to store data associated with multiple members of the organization, wherein the data includes data that directly states one or more areas of expertise for the multiple members of the organization;

wherein the memory further includes a people network model module interfaced with the communications network and interfaced with the memory and operable to model communications of the communications network;

wherein the memory further includes code that is executable by the processor and the code comprises:

an interaction level analyzer module interfaced with the people network model module and operable to apply a model of the communications to the level of interaction of the plural members to determine a people network representation; and

a target locator and contact path module interfaced with the people network model and the interaction level analyzer module to:

- (i) accept a query from a first member for members of the organization having a desired expertise;
- (ii) process the data that directly states the one or more areas of expertise for the multiple members of the organization to identify at least one or more target individuals of the organization, wherein the data associated with each target individual states that each target individual has expertise in an area of expertise desired by the first member of the organization;
- (iii) determine a contact path between the first member of the organization and at least one of the one or more ~~[[the]]~~ target ~~individual~~ individuals, the contact path including one or more members of the organization having at least a predetermined

31 level of interaction with at least one of the first member and at
32 least one of the target individual individuals and the contact
33 path identifies one or more members of the organization that
34 represent a proposed path through the people network for the
35 first member to contact at least one of the target individual
36 individuals, wherein the one or members of the contact path are
37 distinct from the first member and each target individual; and
38 (iv) provide the first member with the contact path and the one or more
39 target individuals based on the desired expertise and the level of
40 interaction of the first member with members of the
41 organization[[: and]].

1 11. (Original) The system of Claim 10 further comprising a graphical user
2 interface operable to depict a visualization of the people network of a selected member of
3 the organization.

1 12. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 11 wherein the
2 graphical user interface depicts a selected member's people network representation as
3 plural nodes interfaced with edges, the nodes representing members of the network and
4 the lines representing the level of interaction between the members.

1 13. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 11 wherein the
2 graphical user interface depicts the first member's people network representation as a
3 bullseye having the first member at the center and members of the organization
4 distributed in successive rings representing the level of interaction with the first member.

1 14. (Original) The system of Claim 10 wherein the people network model
2 module is further operable to model the people network of the organization as a directed
3 graph having plural nodes and edges, the nodes representing members of the organization
4 and the edges representing the level of interaction between nodes.

1 15. (Canceled)

1 16. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 10 wherein the target locator
2 and contact path module further comprises code executable by the processor to provide at
3 least one of the one or more target individuals using a shortest path determination to
4 prioritize target individuals in order of strongest contact path with the first member.

1 17. (Currently Amended) A method of using a computer system for
2 determining a target individual having expertise in a subject matter of interest to a first
3 member of an organization, the method comprising executing code stored in the
4 computer system for:

5 storing in a memory data associated with multiple members of the organization,
6 wherein the data includes data that directly states one or more areas of expertise for the
7 multiple members of the organization and the target individual is one of the multiple
8 members of the organization;

9 processing the data that directly states the one or more areas of expertise for the
10 multiple members of the organization to identify one or more ~~target individuals~~ members
11 of the organization, wherein the data associated with each ~~of the identified members of~~
12 ~~the organization~~ target individual states that the ~~target individual has one or more~~
13 members have expertise in the subject matter;

14 selecting ~~[[as]]~~ one or more target individuals ~~from~~ only the one or more
15 identified members having ~~at least a predetermined level of electronic communication~~
16 ~~interaction with the first member and~~ the expertise in the subject matter as stated in the
17 data associated with each target individual;

18 determining a contact path between the first member of the organization and at
19 least one of the one or more ~~[[the]]~~ target ~~individual~~ individuals, the contact path
20 including one or more members of the organization having at least a predetermined level
21 of interaction with at least one of the first member and at least one of the target ~~individual~~
22 individuals and the contact path identifies one or more members of the organization that
23 represent a proposed path through the people network for the first member to contact at
24 least one of the target ~~individual~~ individuals, wherein the one or members of the contact
25 path are distinct from the first member and each target individual; and

26 providing the first member with at least one of the contact paths to each at least
27 one of the target individuals.

1 18. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 17 wherein selecting [[as]]
2 one or more target individuals further comprises identifying members having contact
3 paths of less than a predetermined number of intervening members between [[the]] each
4 target individual and the first member.

1 19. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 17 wherein providing
2 the first member with contact paths comprises:
3 modeling a people network of the organization based on communications of
4 members of the organization across a network; and
5 determining the contact paths by analyzing the level of interaction between
6 members of the organization.

1 20. (Original) The method of Claim 19 wherein modeling a people
2 network comprises representing the people network as a directed graph having a node for
3 each member of the organization, the nodes interfaced by edges representing levels of
4 interaction.

1 21. (Original) The method of Claim 20 wherein the communications
2 network supports plural type of communication and wherein each edge has a set of
3 weights, each type of communication having an associated weight.

1 22. (Original) The method of Claim 19 wherein the communications
2 comprise e-mail communications.

1 23. (Original) The method of Claim 19 wherein the communications
2 comprise instant message communications.

1 24. (Original) The method of Claim 19 wherein the communications
2 comprise phone communications.

1 25. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 19 wherein determining the
2 contact paths comprises performing a strongest path analysis using the people network
3 model to prioritize the one or more target individuals.

1 26. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 wherein ~~selecting~~
2 determining a contact path between the first member of the organization and the target
3 individual comprises:
4 ~~selecting~~ determining a contact path between the first member of the organization
5 and the target individual, wherein the contact path includes ~~at least one~~ multiple
6 intervening ~~member~~ members of the organization between the first member and the target
7 individual.

1 27. (Currently Amended) The system of Claim 10 wherein the people network
2 representation includes a contact path between the first member and the one or more
3 target individuals and the contact path includes ~~at least one~~ multiple intervening members
4 of the organization between the first member and at least one of the one or more target
5 individuals.

1 28. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 17 wherein providing the first
2 member with at least one contact path to ~~each~~ at least one of the target individuals
3 comprises:
4 providing the first member with at least one contact path to ~~each~~ at least one of
5 the target individuals, wherein the contact path includes ~~at least one~~ multiple intervening
6 ~~member~~ members of the organization between the first member and at least one of the
7 target ~~individual~~ individuals.

1 29. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 1 further comprising:
2 providing data to a computer system, wherein the data causes the computer
3 system to display the contact path and the expertise at least one of target ~~individual~~
4 individuals.

1 30. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein storing in a
2 memory further comprises:
3 storing the data in a contact database and the data, including the data that states
4 the one or more areas of expertise for the multiple members of the organization, is stored
5 in the contact database.

1 31. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 10 wherein the memory
2 comprises a contact database and the data, including the data that states the one or more
3 areas of expertise for the multiple members of the organization, is stored in the contact
4 database.

1 32. (Previously Presented) The system of Claim 10 wherein the code
2 executable by the processor further comprises:
3 a display module to provide data to a computer system, wherein the data causes
4 the computer system to display target individuals with rankings based on expertise.

1 33. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 17 further comprising:
2 providing data to a computer system for displaying the contact path and the
3 expertise of at least one of the of target ~~individual~~ individuals.

1 34. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 17 wherein storing in a
2 memory further comprises:
3 storing the data in a contact database and the data, including the data that states
4 the one or more areas of expertise for the multiple members of the organization, is stored
5 in the contact database.